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DOCUMENTS

A JOURNAL OF LIFE IN WISCONSIN ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

KEPT BY WILLARD KEYES OF NEWFANE, VERMONT

On the second day of June in A. D. one thousand eight hundred and seventeen, I, Willard Keyes, (being impelled by a curiosity, or desire of seeing other places than those in the vicinity of my Native town,) started from Newfane in Vermont intending to travel into the western parts of the United States.—

Pass through Wardsboro—Stratton—across Green Mountain nine miles entire forrest—Arlington—South road to Shaftsbury—30 miles.

June 3^d—through a corner of Bennington—Hoosick N. Y.—leave the main road, pass Hoosick-falls—Pittstown, Fosters inn, 24 miles.

” 4th Detained by rain till one oClock muddy roads—Brunswick—Troy, Pattersons inn, rainy—only 11 miles to day—

” 5th Cross north river and ride to Albany 6 miles—71 from Newfane—ramble about the City till one oclock—grow tired of a City life, dine in Washington St.—and start, taking the great Western turnpike leading to Cherry Valley travel in company with a sociable Dutchman—who gives me a ride in his waggon) muddy. Clay—a sudden shower—lodging at Deprats, Dutch inn Guiteerland 14 miles from albany—

June 6th Breakfast at Cheesmans—Princeton get a ride 20 miles, through, Duanesburg, Schoharie-Bridge—Carlisle—36 miles from Albany conclude to leave this road and strike the Mohawk find company, agree to an evenings walk stop & rest at a Cave arrive at Canajoharry-bridge.

11 at night—47 miles fr. Albany

June 7th Breakfast, and start late, being well jagged with yesterdays travel—proceed up the Mohawk, on the south side, (the turnpike is on

¹ For a short account of this journal see the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, III, 268-70.

the north)—Mindon—German-Flats—Herkemer-Courthouse—Emmersons inn—27 miles to day—the Grand Canal² is staked out on and near the road I traveled to day

” 8th Sabbath, day of rest—A dutch meeting—some young emigrants from Newhampshire came along, made some appology for traveling on the sabbath, and invited me to accompany them, but I declined

June 9th—Appearance of rain at hand—start for Utica 13 miles—Breakfast at Frankfort—begins to rain—get a ride to Utica—a very handsome Village rainy—towards night set forward for Whitestown 17 miles this day—large woolen factories in this vicinity but doing very little buisiness

Fall in Company with a Gent. traveller who gives the following account of himself.

“Constant A. Andrews by name, from Newyork City going to a tract of land on the mississippi river called “Carvers Purchase,—has purchased some of sd. land.—that the Proprietor, D^r. Samuel Peters,³ with agents from a Company of merchants in Newyork who have purchased sd. tract of D^r. P. are coming on and will join him at Rome., or York in Canada.,

June 10th Rainy—get a ride to Rome, about 100 miles from Albany—put up at Merills, Stage hotel,

I must now sit down and determine what course to pursue—the prospect is rather gloomy—

Swarms have been and are pouring from the “nation’s hive” (New England) to people the Western forrests; it seems they have overstocked the market; for I daily meet those who are retracing their steps; they tell a discouraging story—

I have the choice of two ways before me, either to sneak back again like a henhearted fellow, or boldly venture beyond the beaten track of former adventurers, I have dissuasives from the former, and incentives to the latter course. M^r. Andrews is solicitous to have me accompany him; and I am inclined to think I shall—

² The Erie Canal, begun in 1816 and opened to traffic in 1825.

³ Rev. Samuel Peters was an Episcopal clergyman of Connecticut, who because of Tory proclivities was driven out of the country at the opening of the Revolution and for thirty years resided in England. In 1805 he came back to America and devoted the remaining twenty years of his life to vain efforts to obtain ownership of the Carver Grant in western Wisconsin. Peters is perhaps best known to posterity for his history of Connecticut, published anonymously in London in 1781.

May the Almighty God who rules the Universe be my Protector, may he incline my heart to pursue that which will conduce most to his glory, and my Eternal happiness.

June 11th—Wait the arrival of boats, intending to take passage down to Oswego—Rome is situated on the Mowhawk where it is united by a canal with Wood-Creek.

” 12th Superior Court sits at Rome—a large number of criminals indicted, among whom I recognised one familiar face, vis. Benjamin Flint a native of Newfane Vt.

(for Counterfeiting.

” 13-14th Rainy—wait with impatience for boats—attend court—several criminals tried and sentenced to hard labor, from 5 to ten years—an Indian convicted of murdering his brother—Evening—boats at length arrive up the Mohawk—Write to my father—enclose a ticket in the Washington Bridge lottery No. 9102—

” 15th—Sabbath—take our passage down Wood-Creek, which is very winding. Country flat and in many places inundated Arrive at Oneida Lake, 22 miles by the Creek—a tavern without beds—take lodging across 2 chairs—

” 16th—Windbound at the head of Oneida wait with great impatience—Eve. wind abates—10 o'clock start by rowing—I lend some assistance—continue all night by rowing.

” 17th Fair wind for sailing—7 o'clock opposite Rotterdam unfortunately run on a rift of rocks get of[f] with some difficulty—28 miles across the lake—enter Oswego river—stop for the night at “three river Point”—18 m. fr. the Lake a bridge across the river here—two or three houses—obtain lodging in one of them

” 18th take a pilot to pass the rapids—12 miles to the falls—at very high water, boats sometimes pass down but never ascend these falls—one mile, land Carriage—by the falls—fortunately find a boat ready to start. 12 miles to Oswego on Lake Ontario—a considerable village—it was taken by the British in the last war—arrived here about noon—Engage a passage to York Upper Canada in the Schooner Morning Star—140 miles for \$3—

June 19th—Wait a favorable wind—Sunset hoist sail with a light breeze—the cargo consists entirely of passengers, about 40 in number, mostly emigrants from England, going to Canada.

June 20th Very little wind, therefore we make but little progress—the water of the Lake is clear and cool.

” 21^t A dead calm most of the day

June 22^d—Sabbath—York light-house in sight—scarcely any wind—4 oclock PM. cast anchor in the bay of “little York” (otherwise Toronto.)⁴

” 23^d—Mr. Andrews calls on Mrs. Jarvis, daughter of Dr. Peters, and wife of the secretary of U. Canada and informs her that her father is on the way here—she is transported with the news—requests me to start with the information to his son W^m. B. Peters, Attorney, in Dundass, near Burlington heights, 50 miles west—(now called Hamilton) furnished with a good horse, and letters of introduction arrive in Dundass late in the evening.

June 24th Esq. Peters, absent from home—am invited to tarry till his return—am treated with much politeness—Mrs Peters and her daughter, are very amiable in the afternoon walk out to view “Burlington heights” the British headquarters during the late war.

June 25th—return to York—the country is newly settled principally by “Americans (or as they are called, Yankees)” —the land is generally flat, heavy timbered, and clay soil, but appears to be fertile, their farms tho—new, look flourishing—the road is mostly on a streight line, called “Dundass street” 50 miles in length—with farms arranged on each side—adjoining York I passed through a Pine forrest of 8 miles—

June 26th hire my board at a private house \$3.50 per week—purposing to wait the arrival of Dr Peters

” 27 Write to my Brother Royal in Ellicott Ny.

” 28th this place is the seat of Government for Upper Canada, it is handsomly laid out into building lots and will probably be a place of considerable trade when the back country is well stocked with inhabitants it was taken by the Americans under Gen. Pike who lost his life by their blowing up the Arsenal—

By an act passed since the war if a citizen of the U. Stats purchases land in this Province it is forfeited to the Crown it is said nearly half of the inhabitants are natives of the States, and they begin to grow jealous of them—Dureing the war any who were suspected of being

⁴The parenthetical explanation was, apparently, added to the manuscript at some later time.

friendly to the Americans were persecuted with the greatest severity. June 29th Sabbath—A meeting for religious worship is held in town, but being a stranger, I did not attend

" 30th C. A. Andrews executes a deed of 100 hundred acres of land in "Carvers tract" to me

July 1^t Busy myself by making board rules—reading or sauntering through the streets—

" 2^d—Dr. Peters arrives—Accompanied by Messrs—Thos. Taylor and John Tuthill—an affecting meeting of him and his daughter, after 12 years absence—

" 3^d. Dr Peters is about 84 years of age,⁵ quite infirm, but says he will pursue his object of obtaining "Carvers land till he obtains it, or ends his life—he is very sociable—promises me good encouragement, as do the other agents if I will go with them

July 4th American Independance—hear the Cannon at fort Niagara which makes the royalists snarl Some American mechanics imprudently ride through through the town with a flag hoisted—some miscreants collected at night to mob them, but did not succeed—

July 5th—3 oclock PM. After much trouble, we start in a waggon for Lake Simcoe—distance 40 miles North—our company consists of Taylor, Tuthill, Andrews and myself—Dr Peters stays till monday. July 6th Sabbath. Have had entertainment and lodging in a town Called "Volney"—our rout is through a Quaker Settlement—handsome farms though mostly new 3 oclock PM arrive at "Holland Landing" "Gillington"—just escape a tremendous shower—a Mr Johnson keeps tavern here—and owns a small schooner that can come up the river to this place

July 7th Walk out to Newmarket—Robinsons mills store &C—6 miles—

July 8th—Indians are as thick as bees—the British have been dealing out presents to them

" 9th Johnsons schooner sails—Andrews and Taylor take passage in her—Tuthill and myself wait with impatience for Dr Peters—

" 10th Dr. P. arrives—12 oclock we start in a little Birchbark Canoe, with a frenchman, his squaw, 3 children and several hundred weight of baggage—tis astonishing how much these "eggshells" will

⁵ Peters was born Nov. 20 (O. S.), 1735; he was, therefore, in his eighty-second year at this time.

bear up on the water—the least movement of those unacquainted with them will upset them—they are so light that an Indian will carry a considerable one on his head across the portages—We paddle down Holland River, 10 miles—enter Lake Simcoe 30 miles across—night overtakes us about halfway—land—strike up a fire—and encamp in the open air—a tough beginning for old D^r- P- but his courage holds good

July 11th—start early—soon commences a heavy rain, that drenches us to the skin—11 o'clock Arrive at Kempenfelt bay—west end of the Lake—find Andrews and Taylor here the British have 3 store houses here.

July 12th- Cross a portage of 8 miles, horrible road thro. woods and swamps, to Nottowassauga Creek—Mosketoes beat all I ever met with before—a few store houses here D^r P. Andrews, and Tuthill, immediately start down the river in an Indian Canoe deeply laden with baggage—

July 13th Sabbath—Taylor and myself proceed in our frenchman's canoe—a very winding stream—the country flat, thickly wooded and in many places overflowed so that we sometimes left the crooked channell and sailed through the woods—1 o'clock arrive at Nottowassauga, on Lake Huron^e—40 miles by the Creek—a few houses here the British had a considerable establishment at this place but have lately transferred it to Pentanguichine

July 14th The Schooner we intended to have taken passage in, sailed before our arrival; therefore we are obliged to purchase a small boat, \$60—it being calm we set off [f] by rowing—our Company consists of 10 persons viz. D^r Peters, Andrews, Taylor, Tuthill, our frenchman, his wife and three children—5 working hands, 4 at the oar and one at the helm, at which we take turns—Intend to coast the N. E. shores of Huron to Drummond island, and thence to Mackinaw—expect to be out 10 or 12 days—stop to dine on a barren sandy shore—we regale ourselves with a dish of tea, and mess of fish our course is about N.W.—stop for the night on a small island inhabited, chiefly, by gnats who relieved us gladly.

July 15th start by rowing—pass “Mackodash bay” at the head of it the British have an establishment called Pentanguichine—the shores and bottom of the Lake is solid rock.

* The travelers had now reached Nottawasaga Bay, which is at the southeastern end of Georgian Bay.

” 16th—The Lake still and smooth the greatest curiosity we have is the immense piles of rocks. islands of rocks innumerable—encamp on one of them,—tormented by Mosketoes—sleep but little.

July 17th Start Early, row accross a large bay—high surf—afternoon, another bay, wind and waves uncommonly high, our passage dangerous among rocks that present themselves on every side the billows breaking over them—Again pleasant sailing being sheltered by islands 3 oclock, head West, wind against us—make our bed on the soft side of a rock.

July 18th Start with the sun—wind ahead, surf high—row hard about 10 miles—stop on an island of rocks curiously broken into square pieces as nice as if sawed—Juniper, and Goosbery bushes are the principal vegetable productions—exercise our ingenuity in making a goosbery Pie, have rare luck—4 oclock PM. start again—very little wind—sundown, encamp on rocks

” 19th Set off[f] at sunrise—wind strong ahead obliged to lie by all day

” 20th Sabbath, rather cold, breakfast and proceed—the wind still in our teeth—stop at 4 PM.

July 21^t Free wind for sailing—pass an Indian village, at a place called by the French “cloche” (Bell, in English⁷) they offer us a Beaver skin for Skittewabaw (rum)—a long string of islands—sail till near dark.

July 22^d Dr. Peters quite sick with the Lumbago—sail by daylight—6 miles, the wind Comes ahead and compells us to lie by all day high winds the foaming billows dash and break over the rocks with great fury.

July 23^d High winds from the west confine us still to our little island of rocks—our fire overruns the most of it and burns both wood and soil the principal timber that grows on these barran shores is stintid pine, cedar and juniper.

July 24th Start by daybreak—still a westerly breeze—sunset encamp on a sandy shore thick woods—quite cool.

July 25th Wind against us by hard rowing reach an Indian encampment—11 oclock A. M. stop—they are called Missasauges—a sandy plain surrounded by high rocky mountains—tack to the SW. meet

⁷ Apparently Cloche Island, which lies between Manitoulin Island and the Ontario mainland.

some Mackinaw boats laden with peltry—encamp on an island some distance from land

July 26th Continue steering S. W.—wind ahead—Drummond island in sight—and we begin to take courage—encamp on a small island.

July 27th—Sabbath—Rainy morning—the first we have had for 16 days—St. Joseph's, at the outlet of Lake Superior, in sight—11 o'clock AM, reach the settlement on Drummond's island a new establishment by the British⁸— — — this island is said to be about 45 miles long the settlement is on the south end, they keep a garrison here commanded by a Col.

July 28th, Start for Mackinaw—45 miles West the wind soon sets in against us—with hard tugging at the oar we reach a small island about half way.

" 29th One o'clock in the morn—we start, by the light of the moon—lake still and smooth—sunrise the wind helps a little—9 o'clock, fine breeze, Mackinaw in sight—the fort makes a handsome appearance, standing on high ground and completely white-washed—12, we sail up handsomely to the celebrated island of Mackinaw and landed once more on American soil having coasted the Northern shore of L. Huron about 400 miles—a chain of islands stretch along near the shore most of the way—we were obliged to keep behind them as much as possible with our little boat to avoid the roughness of the lake—the island of Mackinaw is about 3 miles long and 1½ broad the fort stands on elevated ground and can command the whole island⁹ the town is on the south shore—a small plain just under the fort, the houses are many of them built of logs and roofs covered with bark however their appearance is better inside than out, many of them are handsomely furnished the inhabitants are a mixture of Americans French, British and Indians of all sorts and descriptions—the garrison consists of about 200 men commanded by Col. McNeil¹⁰ con-

⁸The post on Drummond Island had been established after the British withdrew from Mackinac in 1815. Although in fact within the boundary of the United States, the establishment was maintained by the British as a center for the control of the Indian trade until 1828.

⁹The latter observation is incorrect, as the Americans learned to their sorrow when the British attacked the place in the summer of 1812.

¹⁰Col. John McNeil had distinguished himself for bravery and hard fighting in the War of 1812. He left the army in 1830, having received from President Jackson the appointment of surveyor of the port of Boston. He was one of the commissioners who negotiated the Indian treaty of 1829 at Prairie du Chien; copies of his journals on that occasion were later supplied the Wisconsin Historical Society by the executors of his will.

siderable trade is carried on here it being the general rendezvous of Indian traders.

July 30th Write to my friends—Mr. Taylor concludes to return to Newyork—the rest of our company prepare for a voyage to Prairie du Chien, 600 miles,—where we expect to winter—were disappointed of finding persons at Mackinaw with whom we intended to open our buisness.

July 31^t Taylor sails for Buffalo, about 700 miles

August 1^t—About thirty bark canoes full of Savages arrive, part Sacks and part Winnibagoes, or Peunt towards night they commence a dancing frolic—it was a novel sight to me—they danced and sung before almost every door in the village from each of which they expect a present of Bread, tobacco, whiskey or something else—most of them were nearly naked and were painted or daubed with black, red and white, and decorated with quills, feathers, tails of wild beasts &C. so as to appear horribly frightful.

Aug. 2^d Two months since I left Newfane about sundown start for Prairie du Chien having hired our passage in an Indian trading boat, belonging to Mr John Dousman,¹¹ our company consists of Dr. Peters, Andrews, Tuthill and myself passengers,—Andrew Leiphart master, 1 interpreter 1 clerk, and 6 french boatmen. proceed about 5 miles and encamp—

Aug. 3^d—Sabbath Indians hooting all night—Breakfast and proceed—pass the Michegan streights—wind comes ahead obliged to lie by

Aug. 4th A very heavy shower, with sharp Lightning and hard thunder last night in the morning, cold and high winds—strike our tent and remove into the woods for shelter from the wind

” 5th ” 6th Wind high, from the west, the white caps roll and break on the shore with violence—

Aug. 7th A calm—we proceed on our voyage encamp at the mouth of a river—some indian graves in this place.

Aug 8th Warm weather—12 oclock arrive at a place called by the French Shuchwa (Shouchoio)¹² 25 Leagues from Mackinaw—a soft

¹¹ John Dousman was a Pennsylvanian who had come west as an army sutler some years before the War of 1812. He lived for a time at Green Bay, then at Mackinac, and still later (1824) returned to Green Bay, where he died the following year.

¹² Point Seulchoix, in Schoolcraft County, Michigan.

kind of stone or marble is found here—on which we, as new comers must engrave our names, and pay a customary treat to the boat-men—encamp again at the mouth of the river.¹³

Aug. 9th We give the boatmen a treat, one of them turns down about a pint and lies dead drunk—We keep on the North side of the Lake—encamp on a stony flat—

August 10th Arrive at the entrance of Green Bay cross over to the South side—numerous islands, with remarkable high precipices—one, the French call Le De Pou (the Louse)—Pleasant weather—encamp on an island they call “Petite Detroit” (little Streight) a band of Indians reside here, they are employed in building Birch Bark Canoes, and weaving flag mats.¹⁴ Sabbath—

August 11th Pass point “De Mort” (or point of Death) so called from the many Indian canoes wrecked there in attempting to pass the point which is perpendicular—rocks rising out of the water

August 12 Pleasant weather, fair wind for sailing encamp on a white oak plain—Mosketoes troublesome

Aug. 13th Arrive at the head of Green Bay, enter Fox river steering about south—12 oclock arrive at Fort Howard—We had neglected to obtain pasports at Mackinaw but after some difficulty have permission to proceed—pitch our tents about 2 miles above the mouth of the river the inhabitants are French and live on both sides of the river—distant from Mackinaw 240 miles

Aug. 14th This appears to be a pleasant place and the land fertile, though poorly cultivated—their crops of Wheat and corn look well obtain garden vegetables, milk, &C. but at a high price A funeral on the death of a frenchman—cermonies performed in the Roman Catholic style—sunset—proceed about 2 miles and encamp—the river I should judge is near $\frac{1}{2}$ mile wide the water, very dirty occasioned I believe principally by the Rice blossoms.

Aug. 15th Foggy morning—proceed about 2 m. stop at mr. John Jacobs¹⁵—Dr. Peters Baptises two of his children—our course is S. W. the land on the N. W. Side has a beautiful appearance being

¹³ The Manistique River.

¹⁴ For an interesting account of a visit to this village only a month after Peters' party see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, VI, 165-66.

¹⁵ John B. Jacobs, a native of Canada, who settled at Green Bay about the year 1800. About the year 1827 he returned to Canada and there spent the remainder of his life.

composed of gentle rises interspersed with vales of high grass—very thinly wooded with scattering oak and hickory.

August 16th Start early, proceed to the rapids before breakfast—6 Leagues from Green Bay they unload the boat and drag it near a m^{le} up the rapids—a frenchman¹⁶ lives here who transports the loading in carts—here is an elegant seat for mills and will probably be improved at some future day—the country looks beautiful and inviting—the weather is warm—Lockwood¹⁷ with another trading boat overtakes us—they hire Indian canoes to take part of the load as the river is rapid for several miles

several of us walk 2 or 3 miles—meet two persons by the names of “Gunn, and King”¹⁸ who have been out to gain intelligence respecting Carvers land

Aug 17th Sabbath—The hands have to drag the boat most of the way against a swift current sometimes perpendicular falls—a heavy shower pitch our tent in a twinkling and just escape it—Start again about noon—3 oclock arrive at some falls¹⁹—they are about 5 or 6 feet, perpendicular a solid rock stretches from one shore to the other the two boats double their team, mustering Indians and all, about 25 strong, and haul the boats up without unloading—encamp 1 m. above the fals

Aug 18th Morning Cold—the river spreads out near $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide—smoth sailing a short distance—more rapids—half unload, and cary it at twice to Winnibago Lake—I proceed there by land—it begins to rain—Indians bring us green corn, beans, and potatoes for bread salt and tobacco

Aug 19th Rainy most of the day—Indians continue to supply us with vegetables, ducks venison &C. they take out the boat and Caulk it—

Aug 20th Heavy shower with thunder & lightning last night—cloudy—the men backward about starting—Lockwood started yester-

¹⁶ Apparently Augustin Grignon, a prominent trader of Wisconsin. His recollections are printed in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, III, 197-295.

¹⁷ James H. Lockwood, a prominent resident of Prairie du Chien in the early part of the nineteenth century. Lockwood was a native of New York; he came west as a young man at the close of the War of 1812 and engaged in the Indian trade. His permanent residence at Prairie du Chien dates from 1819. See his recollections in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, II, 98-196.

¹⁸ These men were grandsons of Jonathan Carver and were returning, disappointed, from the same mission on which Peters was outward bound—to gain the recognition of the Sioux chiefs of their claim to the Carver Grant.

¹⁹ Known as the Grand Chute, where the modern city of Appleton has arisen.

day—we move about 12 oclock—the Lake is about 24 miles long from N. to S.—and 6 broad—we steer S—20 miles, then turn west and enter Fox river again—6 miles up we come to Dead Lake 9 m. long, and in the broadest part about 3—course through the Lake N. W. till we arrive at (La Be des Mort) “the Bank of the dead” where we encamp—a band of Menomine Indians live here—called by the French “Folsavoine” (or Wild Rice)—the French in former days destroyed an Indian village at this place for committing depredations on their trade which gave the Bank its name.

Aug. 21^t—Pleasant, but cool—proceed 2 miles and the river branches, the one from the W. is called Wolf river—the Fox river turns S—then E. and almost every point of the Compas but the general course appears to be S. W. Extensive Prairies, or Meadows on each side of the river covered with high grass, and interspersed with groves of young trees—Wild Rice grows in great abundance—ducks and other wild fowl are plenty the day is pleasant and the scenry is beautiful beyond description—the river is about 6 rods wide, very smooth and a serpentine course, winding to the S. and W.—Encamp on a white Oak plain about 6 feet higher than the river—40 m. from Winnibago Lake—90 to the Ouisconsin

Aug 22^d—Some rain last night—cloudy and foggy—proceed 4 miles, pass a place called “Yellow Thunder”²⁰—prospect of rain—steer all points of the compass—5 oclock PM. it begins to rain, encamp on the W. side of river

Aug. 23^d Heavy rain last night—10 oclock arrive at a place where one and half mile by land, equals 15 by the river—several of us walk across the isthmus—shoot Pheasants, ducks and pigeons—the boat in doubling the point steer west and then turn east again—they pass some Indian Lodges, get green corn and mellons this, is said to be midway between Winnibago Lake and the portage into the Ouisconsin 24 leagues each way—a few miles and we enter a Lake called by the Indians “Pockwak” (Flag Lake) 9 miles long—3 broad, course through the lake S.W.—Rice, and flags, or bulrushes are in such abundance as impedes our progress—some of it grows to the height of 6 feet above the water—pitch our tents on the N. side—

²⁰ This was the village of the noted Winnebago chief, Yellow Thunder. He died at an extreme age in February, 1874.

Aug. 24th Sabbath—Pleasant weather—some of us take a trip on land, but in pursuit of game we miss the point we intended to take the boat, and wander over hills and through meadows near 6 miles—arrive on the banks of “Lac la Beuf” (or Ox Lake)—some high hills for this country—shoot a large speckled snake off a tree rattlesnakes are said to abound through this country this lake is 9 miles long but narrow—near night another portage of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile, but the boat has several miles, and is seen meandering through the meadows in every direction, the river is concealed by the grass—

Aug. 25th—24 miles to the portage—general course appears to be near S.—9 o'clock pass a place where a girl was buried, said to be poisoned by a cruel stepmother—the grave enclosed with pickets on the Cross at her head was an inscription in French to the following import “Therese Chappeau died Oct.—1815 aged 10 years”—the river grows narrow, 6 of us get out to walk, thinking to make a short cut we wandered out of our way 6 or 8 miles, crossed a large meadow, a termerack swamp & C. part of us joined the boat a few miles before it reached the portage—they had passed a small Lake called Mud-lake—the channel is narrow and full of rice and mud, in some places almost impassable—arrived at the portage 4 o'clock P. M.

the distance from Mackinaw to this place is, called 140 Leagues, or 420 miles—from Green Bay 60 Leagues—and from this portage to Prairie du Chien 60 Leagues—

Fox river from Winnibago Lake has a very winding course, no rapids, several small lakes and great quantities of Wild Rice—its general course appears to be S. S. W.

On both sides of the river are large and extensive Prairies or meadows covered with high grass—the upland is dry and sandy, principally timbered with various kinds of Oak The Indians inhabiting this country are Winnibagoes and Menomines (called by the French Puants, and Folsavoins) they are reported to be rather inimical to Americans but I saw nothing unfriendly in their behavior—the only domestic animals I saw among them were horses and dogs—they cultivate corn, potatoes, turnips, beans &c.

Aug 26th—The portage between Fox river and the Wisconsin (or as the French spell it Ouisconsin) is little more than a mile, low level land, and free from wood, I think they might be easily united by a

canal—A Frenchman lives here and transports boats and their cargo—he broke his carts and hindered us one day—encamp on the banks of the Wisconsin—Saw a Rattlesnake the first I ever saw. Killed by an American, Indian Trader named Lockwood

Aug. 27th More boats Arrive to the number of 6 12 oclock, our boat, in company with two others, starts down the Wisconsin—rapid current, sandy bottom, not very crooked, and no rice—about 50 or 60 yards wide though it frequently spreads out much wider—full of islands and sand-bars this river is said to head 300 miles above the Portage our course about S. W.—25 miles, and encamp

Aug. 28th Rainy—frequent difficulty in dragging the boat over sand-bars—the adjacent country is full of small hills that shoot up very high and seem to terminate in a point, some are of solid rock, others appear to be sand—the low land is thickly covered with wood—4 oclock PM. pass a perpendicular rock of considerable height—

Aug. 29th—Commences raining at day-break clears up at eight—9 oclock pass the halfway place, 30 Leagues each way, the river turns from S. to S.W.—the land uneven, precipices frequently occur of solid rock—sand-bars numerous, and sometimes rocks—pass a place called “English meadow”²¹ from an English trader and his son, said to have been murdered there by the savages, 20 Leagues to Prairie du Chien

Aug. 30th—9 oclock pass a large plain with high banks, called “Prairie du Bay”—11 Leagues from “Prairie du Chien” pass Blue river, a small stream that comes in from the South between two high points of land, said to be navigable 30 Leagues for small boats—a few miles below another stream from the North called C[1?]ousy river²²—3 Leagues from the mouth of Ouisconsin several of us leave the boats and proceed by land to Prairie du Chien about 6 miles, where we arrive about 4 oclock P. M.

And here I am on the banks of the far famed “Mississippi”—the rout I have traveled is about 2000 miles Three months ago I was in my native town; in the pleasing circle of youthful acquaintance beyond which I had never ventured.

²¹ Probably English Prairie, on which the present town of Muscoda is situated. The usual explanation of the origin of the name is that the English troops under Col. McKay camped here in 1814, en route to the capture of Prairie du Chien.

²² Evidently the modern Kickapoo.

Since that time what varying scenes have been presented to my view! Scenes of terror and disgust, of admiration and delight, have alternately excited my attention. With admiration have I beheld the rare productions of Nature in these uncultivated regions; the verdant plains and variegated hills and dales all clad in Nature's gayest livery without the aid of art, have filled my bosom with delight—On the other hand the tawny Savage of the wilderness, sculking in the thicket, besmeared with paint of various hues, and otherways decorated to render them frightful, thrill terror through the breast of those unacquainted with their manners; and their mode of living and eating is disgusting to those who have any sence of decency or cleanliness—

Aug. 31^t Sabbath—A general muster of the garrison, being the last day of the month about 200 riflemen commanded by Col. Chambers,²³ they appear to be well disciplined—the fort is about 50 yards square, composed of barracks built of hewn logs, with two block houses at opposite corners, mounting several small pieces of artillery—Called Fort "Crawford."

The Prairie is an extensive plain 10 or 12 miles long and from 2 to 4 broad—the inhabitants are French who settled here from Canada about 40 years ago—there is 20 or 30 houses in the vicinity of the fort, besides several clumps in differant parts of the Prairie—the river is said to be about a mile wide opposite the town, and full of islands—the people are galloping about on French Ponys playing at ball, billiards &c. so that the Sabbath appears to be a day of recreation and amusement among them—

Sept. 1^t—Rainy—Indians are numerous though they do not appear so plenty as at Mackinaw—the French I believ have most of them Indian wives

Sept. 2^d—three months since I left home—Excessive warm—the Thermometer 102 degrees in our tent—

²³ Colonel Talbot Chambers was appointed to the army from Pennsylvania about ten years before this time. At the close of the War of 1812 he was sent west to command at Mackinac. In the summer of 1816 he accompanied the troops to Green Bay to establish Fort Howard and commanded here for one winter. He was transferred to Prairie du Chien early in 1817, remaining until the spring of 1818. At Prairie du Chien he acquired an unenviable reputation for despotic conduct. He was dismissed from the army in 1826—according to one account for cutting off a soldier's ears—and entered the Mexican service, where he opposed his former countrymen in the war of 1846-48.

Dr Peters and Tuthill visit Col. Chambers were politely received, and promised his assistance in the prosecution of their object, he is commander in chief here, there being no civil authority in the place

Sept 3^d—Almost every thing bears an exorbitant price—we hire a small room for \$3 per week

Sept. 4th I engage to work for a few days for a Mr Shaw.²⁴ who is building a mill about 4 miles N. by E. from the fort—\$1 per day

Sept. 8th agree to work for Mr Shaw as a carpenter at \$26 per month—Mr. Andrews as a millwright

Sept 14th Sabbath—visit the town on sundays being at work other days—it is the custom with many here to spend this day in riot and drunkenness

Sept 20th Taken very ill expect the Fever and Ague coming on

Sept 21^t Sabbath—Rainy—take a potion of Calomel and Jallap—

Sept. 22^d Ague and Fever hangs on with great severity—commence taking Peruvian bark, as a sure remedy—

Sept. 25th My disorder begins to abate and I commence work though feeble

Oct 10th A second attack of the Fever and Ague—but after a few days, by the Blessing of God and the use of proper medicine am enabled to get rid of it

Oct. 17th Lord Selkirk²⁵ a Scotchman passes the fort, from his settlement on “Red River” on his way to the City of Washington—

Oct 19th Sabbath—Pleasant weather—At ½ past 8 in the Evening a messenger at full speed gave an alarm that the Indians had attacked the town directing us to make the best of our way to the fort—our firearms were all absent, or out of order we immediately concluded to flee—at the same instant the Indian whistle began to sound (the signal for attack) we rushed out were fired upon, and the war-whoop commenced we scatered retreated to the hills, finding ourselves not pursued, collected our company together and found two missing—

²⁴ This was Colonel John Shaw, whose recollections are printed in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, II, 197-232.

²⁵ Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk, in 1811 purchased 116,000 square miles of land in the Canadian Northwest from the Hudson's Bay Company and devoted the remainder of his life to establishing a colony there. He is the real founder of the Canadian West. At the time of his visit to Prairie du Chien Selkirk was en route to settled Canada to stand trial upon charges preferred by representatives of the North West Company, with which he had become embroiled. The story of Selkirk's life and work is told by Louis A. Wood, *The Red River Colony. A Chronicle of the Beginnings of Manitoba* (Toronto: 1915).

after a long consultation we, from various reasons concluded it to be a false alarm, created by some evil disposed, drunken, lowlived persons—we cautiously returned to our cabin, where we found one of our men who in retreating a different way was driven back—and one man lay in the woods all night

Oct 20th—The Indian exploit of last night was performed by the officers of the garrison and some of the principal citizens, led on by the Col.—who came up today to excuse the matter—to palliate the unwarrantable act he said we were too careless in not being well armed, and being too far from the fort for protection he had adopted that plan as the only method of bringing us to our sense of duty—

Oct. 25th A snow storm—cold weather

Oct. 27th Warm—for the season—

Nov. 2 A sleight head ache—symptoms of the Ague returning

Nov. 3^d—Finish working for Mr- Shaw by the month—Undertake, in Co. with mr- Andrews to finish the mill for the use of it till the first of June—expect likewise to build a horse mill for mr- Rolette²⁶

Nov. 4th Quite sick with the Ague though not so violent as at first.

Nov. 9th Write to my father and friends in Vermont—

Nov 11 Rainy day—thunder at night

“ 12th Rig up our cabin and make it comfortable for the winter

Nov. 16 Sabbath—Seldom go to town on other days.

Nov. 18th Col. Chambers lends us some muskets

Nov. 23^d Sabbath—take a walk several miles up the Creek—Snow is about 3 inches

Nov. 28th An Indian Chief of the Fox tribe with his family takes his residence near us—the Indian agent, Mr. Johnson,²⁷ gives him a written recommend to us for friendship and protection

Nov. 30th Sabbath ride to the village—pleasant—the Mississippi has been nearly frozen over, but appears to be breaking up

Dec. 1^t—a heavy rain—

Dec. 2^d—A sudden change in the weather—high winds and cold—

²⁶ Joseph Rolette was a leading citizen of Prairie du Chien in the early decades of the nineteenth century. He was born in Canada in 1781, came to Prairie du Chien in 1806, and died there in 1842.

²⁷ John W. Johnson was the factor in charge of the government Indian trading house at Prairie du Chien. Before the War of 1812 he had served as factor at Fort Madison, Iowa. On the abandonment of the factory system in 1822 Johnson removed to St. Louis. His wife was a woman of the Sauk tribe.

Dec. 5th A French Citizen confined and punished at the fort for selling whiskey to hirelings and soldiers contrary to orders²⁸

Dec. 10th Mild weather—take a walk to the village just at night—

Dec. 19th—Friday Severe cold Thermometer said to be below cypher, or zero.

Dec. 21^t Sabbath remain at home to keep garrison—several ladies visit me²⁹

Dec. 23^d Moderate weather—rainy—

Dec. 25th Thursday—Christmas—the people here observed it with great exactness some as a holy day, and some as a holiday

Dec. 28th Sabbath—take a walk across the Mississippi and thence to town

Dec. 30th AD. 1817 Started the first mill by water in Prairie du Chien—it is a great wonder to most of the people

Dec. 31^t Col. Chambers and other officers visit the mill—bestow many praises upon it

January the first AD. 1818

A new, and may it be a happy year

Farewell to AD. 1817—another year is added to the thousands that have rolled away since time began! — — — —

A new year is ushered in with greetings of happiness—May I indeed have reason to bless it as auspicious, for many years to come.

This, appears to be a proper time to pause and take a retrospect of what is past. — — — —

In reviewing my conduct through the year that is past, with as much impartiality as self is capable of doing, I cannot find a base or unworthy action—A character fair—and conscience clear of intentionally giving offence, or doing an injury, to any of the Children of men!

And am I then so happy as to be in the “path of Wisdom”, so perfect as to need no amendment?—Alas! my conscience tells me no; it whis-

²⁸ Lockwood describes (*Wis. Hist. Colls.*, II, 129) one such punishment at the instance of Colonel Chambers. The culprit was “whipped, and with a bottle hung to his neck, marched through the streets, with music playing the Rogue’s March after him.” A similar affair, wholly to Chambers’ discredit, is described in *Ibid.* 229-30.

²⁹ “To see mill” has been added at this point in the manuscript, evidently at a later time. Shaw’s was the first water mill at Prairie du Chien, and hence may well have been an object of interest to the townsmen. Before its erection the people had had resort to “band mills” for grinding flour, the power being supplied by a horse attached to a sweep.

pers the words of Christ, "one thing thou lackest"—for notwithstanding thy self righteousness, thy soul is in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity!—O! God, it is thou, and thou alone, can cleanse the heart of sin, and draw it out in holy love to thee—suffer me not to remain another year in the stupidity of sin—Save, oh save my soul from endless torment, in Mercy give me grace for the sake of Jesus Christ the Savior and Redemer of sinners, Amen!

Jan. 2^d Write to Pardon Kimball and Lewis Newton, send by the express—the gentry visit the mill again—

Jan. 4th Sabbath—Remain at home alone—am visited by about 20 indians and squaws returning from a hunt, give them a little food and tobacco, they in return give me some venison—

Jan 5th commence cutting timber for Roletts mill—hire one man by the name of Fisher—

Jan 7th Several Indians and squaws encamp about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile above us

Jan. 10th—We had considerable sport in killing a large wolf that had infested our doors for some time

Jan. 11th Sabbath—Ride to the village—Mr Johnson loans to me a file of New[s]papers—Severe cold—the frost bites my ears in returning—

Jan. 12th Our Indian neighbors visit often—we generally give them a little food they bring us some venison to day—

Jan. 13th Andrews leaves here for Roletts mill—some of the Neighbors children come in the evening to learn to read

Jan 14th Weather more moderate

Jan. 19th Start the mill—but little water

" 20th—The water clears away the ice and finds the bottom of the canal—

Jan. 21^t—Pleasant weather—the mill run pretty well—Beautiful evening—the moon at the full—let the mill run all night

Jan. 23^d Cold, the mill freezes up—go to town, return in the evening and find two lusty indians with Fisher, determined to stay through the night but drive them off—

Jan 25th Sabbath Cold, squally—snow about 3 inches—ride to town in a "cariole" (French Sleigh) on the Mississippi—whiskey sells at 6 dollars per gal.—but I am very clear of buying any—return in the evening, and find Fisher very much alarmed by some Indians visiting him and behaving rather uncivil—

Feb. 1^t Sabbath. Write a letter to Moses Rice in, Vt.

Feb. 5th. Keen Cold weather—Dr Peters makes me a visit — — —

Feb. 7th High winds—take a skip across the Prairie to town

Feb. 8th Sabbath—As severe cold I think as I most ever witnessed

Feb 9th fair sun but piercing cold

Feb. 10th A duel fought this morning between Mr O, Fallon,³⁰ Indian Agent and Lt. Shade³¹ of the garrison—the latter recieved the second shot in his under jaw—O, fallon unfortunately escaped without injury

Feb. 15th Sabbath—Col. Chambers lends me a bundle of newspapers—Vt. news—Galusha reelected Gov.—A law about passing to establish three banks—and an abortive attempt to rob, near Brattleboro

Feb. 20th been at work with Mr Andrews for several days, at Rolettes mill—

Feb. 21 Mr J. Shaw's brother arrives from St Louis with several men going to the Pinery for rafting timber

Feb. 22^d Sabbath—Washingtons Birthday under pretence of celebrating it, some of the principal charactors get notoriously drunk.

Feb. 27th—Shaw and his party start for the pinery—take Fisher with them who has formerly lived with me.

Evening—Am now entirely alone my nearest Neighbors on one side ½ mile distant on the other a savage wilderness—

” 28th Pleasant weather—Cut out the canal and bring the water on the wheel

March 1^t Sabbath—After much hard work, start the mill this morn—very warm weather—the People flock in to see the wonderous mill go by water Evnings when destitute of company spend my time in reading, writing, or mending my stockings—my library consists of a Bible and “Baxter's Call”—two precious books—“Carvers travels” an Almanac, and now and then a borrowed file of Newspapers—

My living at present is prety much as follows—Breakfast, Coffee, Bread, dried Beef and Onions—Dinner, fried Pork, Venison, Potatoes, Bread, &c.—Supper, Coffee—Flapjacks Beef and onions—

³⁰ Benjamin O'Fallon was a nephew of George Rogers Clark of Revolutionary fame. He seems to have shared Colonel Chambers' reputation for arbitrary conduct, which may account for Keyes' observation upon the outcome of the duel.

³¹ William G. Shade of Maryland. He resigned from the service in November, 1818.

March 6th Too cold to grind—dress the stones, they are poor things for grinding

March 8th Sabbath Very warm—People anxious to have grinding, let the mill run—thronged with visitors—

March 10th Rainy by spells all day—Evening steady rain—10 o'clock, the flood breaks my waste-gate and stops the mill—My Cellar is full of water and Potatoes drowned—

March 11th A heavy flood last night the dam swept away—Canal broken in many places and a bridge across the Creek has gone down the Missisipi

March 12th—Snow all gone—ground full of water—the Prairie almost impassable—

Eve. 10 o'clock—Commences raining very hard

March 13th—Mr Andrews with several men come to assist mending the dam—water very high—we do but little good—

March 14th Clear and cold—work hard at the dam—grind a little—

March 15th Sabbath—Quite Cold—ride to town—Mississippi rising, and breaking

” 18th—Warm—towards night get most of the water turned into the Canal—start the mill. 10 o'clock, water fails, stop the mill feel unwell—a pain in my bowels, and sickness at my stomach—

” 19th—Pleasant—dress the stones—in the afternoon start the mill—12 at night commenced raining—

March 22^d Sabbath Pleasant—the mill out of order which hinders me from grinding

” 23^d dress the mill stones—

” 26th Stop the mill for want of wheat

” 27th Sabbath—Snow and rain together

Sab.Eve.—have been reading “Baxters Call to the Unconverted” his words cary Conviction to the Conscience, but alas! how soon they are forgotten

March 30th Warm and Pleasant—

April 1^t People begin to plow their land and sow wheat—

” 4th The mill out of order, by the works settling, Mr- Andrews assists in regulating it

April 5th—Sabbath—Walk to the village—the Prarie quite dry—green herbage just springing up—All Nature looks smiling and gay—

Surely if we have hearts susceptible of gratitude, they would at this time teem with grateful love, to that Benificent Being who gives life and animation to countless Millions!— — —

April 8th Warm and Pleasant—quit the mill for want of Wheat, and work with mr- Andrews

April 10th Return to the mill—

Mr- O' Fallon, Indian Agent, starts for the falls of "St. Anthony" and St Peters river, with two boats and 50 or 60 men, to visit and council with the Souix—

" 12th Sabbath—beautiful weather—

" 14th Quit the mill again— —

" 16th Shaw and Fisher come down from "Black river" in a starving condition—have had bad luck in getting their raft into the Mississippi

April 19th High wind from the North for several days, and cold—

April 22^d Col. Chambers orders 4 building lots to be laid off, below the village on the river for the use of Americans—I obtain the 2 choice—purchase some rails and partly enclose it—the Menomine Indians have a meeting or dance—it seems to be of the religious kind—they performed a great many ceremonies the meaning of which I did not comprehend—the speakers delivered their discourses with great rapidity and vehemence some of them continue to harangue more than two hours without intermission— — — —

April 24th—A Boat arrives from St. Louis 35 days—laden with Provisions, Whiskey, dry goods also packets of letters and Newspapers—Whiskey has been sold at 10 or 12 dollars the gallon—many other articles exorbitantly high

April 25th Walk out into the Prairie to see an Indian game at Ball—the Menominies and Winnibagoes play on opposite sides—they display great activity and address in catching and hurling the ball, and mind neither broken bones nor bruises—indeed it is a most vigorous and manly exercise—"Carver gives a particular description of it in his travels— — — the Menomines are victorious 3 times out of 5 and win the prize—

April 26th Sabbath—Indian traders returning from St Peters river and other places the celebrated Col. Dickson³² comes in with them—

³² Robert Dickson, noted British-Indian leader in the Northwest. Dickson had great influence with the Sioux, having married the daughter of a Sioux chief. An account of his career is printed in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, XII, 133-53.

lately from "L. Selkerks settlement" he is detained on suspicion of transgressing our laws—the militia or "fensibles of Prairie du Chien" mustered—A false alarm at the fort about midnight—to try the spirit of the militia in turning out—

April 28th O' Fallon returns from council with the Souix. (formerly called Naudowessies)

May 1st—Warm—Andrews and myself cross the river in a canoe, pass through a narrow slue between two islands—the river about one mile wide—ascend a small stream opposite the town about 2 miles to look for a mill seat—wind high in returning—

May 2 Rather cold—Northwest wind—

May 3^d Sabbath Suddenly taken with the Crick, occasioned by taking cold—

A complaint is made to the Indian agent against the Winnibagoes for stealing horses and shooting hogs—they are threatened with confinement and punishment at the fort unless they make restitution

May 4th—Write to my father—work at Roletts mill—Rolette sells the whole of his property in this place to Mr Ayrd³³ a fur trader for \$9000

May 5th Evning—have been grinding all day, and continue—the fire is overrunning the country which is always the case here in the spring and autumn—it is slowly decending the hills south of my cabin in a column of more than a mile in length, enlightning the whole valley otherwise dark and cloudy—it is a pleasing though solemn prospect.

May 6th Cool morning, with a little rain and snow—borrow some Newspapers of Mr Johnson

May 9th Dissolve partnership with Mr. Andrews by mutual consent—raise my price from 25, to 37 1/2 cts. per bushel for grinding

" 10th Sabbath Warm and Pleasant—visited by a number of French people at the mill

" 11th—A smart thundershower in the morning—showry all day—there has been no rain for some time before

" 12th Uncommon heavy thunder last night attended with rain—from the best observations I have been able to make, there is not near the quantity of rain falls here, there does in Vt.,—but there is generally every morning a very large dew—

³³ James Aird, a Scotch trader who had located at Prairie du Chien in the latter part of the eighteenth century. His trade was largely with the Sioux.

May 14th At the mill—beautifully pleasant weather—Plum, and Cherry trees in full bloom—here I live like a hermit among the mountains, enjoying the Pleasures of solitude and retirement—tend the mill, read and write, prepare my victuals, and work a little

May 15th People are planting their corn—it sells at \$6 per bush., Potatoes, at \$5 they are miserable farmers—but little better than the Indians—have plenty of good land if they would but cultivate it

May 16th—Rolette, and Ayrd have had an arbitration of several days about their bargain.

May 17th Sabbath—cool and likely for rain

May 20th Dr- Peters not being permitted by the authorities here to open his business is obliged tho reluctantly to return; but is still confident he shall ultimately succeed having had private intelligence from several sources that are encouraging—

Write to Mr Thos- Taylor of Newyork City Bowry—likewise to my brother Royal, at Ellicott N.Y.

May 21^t Mr Tuthill starts this noon—write to my sister Philinda—am quite unwell—take a potion of Physic of Dr Peirsons—return to the mill—

May 22^d had a restless night—about noon just able to crawl to the nearest Neighbors

May 23^d—Growing better of my sickness close my business at the mill and remove to the village—have made arrangements to commence a school—limited my engagements to 3 months—30 students subscribed, at \$2 per month each—2 large Barges arrive from St Louis

May 24th Sabbath—Commence Board with Mr Faribault³⁴ \$15 per month

May 25th Commence teaching school have but 2 or 3 pupils, that can speak much English

May 26th Rainy most of the day—the roof of my house leaky

³⁴ Jean Baptiste Fairbault, a native of Canada who came west in 1798 as an employee of the Northwest Company. About the year 1806 he located at Prairie du Chien, leaving here in 1819 to settle at Fort Snelling. From 1799 (when he was stationed on the Des Moines River) on he was engaged in trade with the Sioux. A county in Minnesota is named in his honor, and the city of Faribault in honor of his son, Alexander, who was born at Prairie du Chien in 1806. An account of Faribault's career is given in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, III, 168-79.

May 27th A heavy rain last night clear and fair in the morn—have about 20 scholars that attend—a few of them can spell considerably—and form letters tolerably correct in writing

May 28th Quite cool for the season requiring a fire in my school—At the mill I was nightly serenaded by Whipperwills—here, it is Indian Powwows—the Copper coulered Natives, are as thick as grasshoppers in a dry autumn—

May 29th Have a tooth rotting, that gives me much inconvenience at meal time—borrow a Dictionary of the French and English Language—

May 31^t Sabbath—General muster of the garrison troops—being the last day of the month—the militia are mustered every Sunday—I have not mustered with them yet—nor will I, on the Sabbath if I can avoid it—the Sabbath is used here as a leisure day, when those who do not choose to work, amuse themselves with play and holiday recreations—